

The Sansoni Commission Evidence

The Story of the Sri Lanka Race Riots 1977

No 2

Saturday August 26, 1978

Re. 1



The First Day's Sitzings in Jaffna: Listening to the proceedings are;- (left to right) Messrs. S. Kathiravetpillai, M. P. for Kopay, S. Thambithurai, retired District Judge, X. M. Sellatambu, M. P. for Mullaitivu, A. Amirthalingam, and S. Thondaman, leader of the hill-country Tamils.

'PLEASE DON'T SHOOT'

'H. Q. I. Jaffna pleaded with the P. Cs'

The officers of the Jaffna Police appeared to have no control over the rank and file, according to Mr. A. Amirthalingam, M. P. and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, when he gave evidence before the Sansoni Commission.

Mr. Amirthalingam referred to the assault on him by Constables on the 16th morning. "One hit me with the butt of the gun and another hit me with his hands. Those two senior officers who were by my side tried to protect me by embracing me. They had no control over the constables. At that stage I turned round and saw none of the men had numbers. They were in uniform but without numbers.

"The senior officers were there, but they had not seen to it that these men had identifying numbers on them. At that stage the crowd which had been kept away saw me being assaulted and they started shouting.

"Mr. Yogeswaran M. P. walked towards the crowd to ask them to go away. At that time four police officers behind me fired four shots in the direction of the crowd and the pathetic spectacle at that time was to see the H. Q. I. and others pleading with their men not to shoot. This showed the depths to which discipline had sunk in the Jaffna Police. "They begged of them not to shoot," said Mr. Amirthalingam.

POLICE INCIVILITY AT CARNIVAL

Earlier Mr. Amirthalingam said:

"On the 12th of August certain police officers entered the carnival grounds - they tried to enter the grounds without tickets. The person at the gate asked for their tickets and insisted that they should buy their tickets. Thereupon, reluctantly the police officers paid for their tickets and entered the carnival grounds. After entering the carnival grounds they started regaling themselves with liquor and one of them went up and picked up a quarrel with the man at the gate and assaulted him. A crowd collected. The man at the gate was very careful and said he would deal with the matter and he peacefully settled the matter and the police officers went away.

"On the 13th morning, the organisers of the carnival - Dr. Philips and others on their behalf, made representations to the Jaffna Police. They also approached the A. S. P and asked for his intervention to prevent the Police from coming to the carnival grounds on the night of the 13th which was the final night. The H. Q. I. assured them when Mr. Yogeswaran also spoke, that the S. P. had ordered the police not to go to the carnival grounds on the night of the 13th. On 13th night some police officers in civil clothes from Anacottai and Chavakacheri had gone to the carnival. There they had partaken of refreshment and refused to pay, a free-for-

all took place on the grounds in the course of which two police officers got injured. One was hospitalised in the Jaffna hospital and the other in the Chavakacheri Hospital.

"From the morning of the 14th innocent passers-by were assaulted by the police on the roads of Jaffna. It started with the assault on lorry drivers driving on the roads close to the building (Public Library Jaffna). Then incidents took place all over. On the 14th the incidents were not of a grave nature. These incidents continued and on the 15th when one Jesudasan of the C. T. B. was on his way to the depot, he was assaulted

and injured near the esplanade and various others too were injured.

Jaffna M. P. sends a telegram

"As a result of the Police action on the 15th, complaints were made to the M. P., for Jaffna, who immediately tried to contact the Superintendent of Police. He could not contact him. He sent telegrams to the I. G. P., and to the Deputy Minister of Defence, Mr. Werapitiya. This is the text of the telegram; in fact all the were made available to me in the course of my speech

on the Adjournment Debate I placed the which facts before the Assembly.

"Police attack on civilians of Jaffna. Unprovoked and high-handed. Three with serious injuries admitted to hospital. Please order immediate probe. Situation tense. Request S. P. bring situation under control. - V. Yogeswaran, M. P. for Jaffna."

"This was the telegram that the M. P., Jaffna, sent to the I. G. P., and the Deputy Minister of Defence on the 15th. The assaults on people continued in various parts of Jaffna. On the 15th evening there were foreign press correspondents who

(Continued on Page 2)

"Those who do not remember the past are condemned to relive it"

- Santayana - American philosopher 1863-1952

POLICE RUN AMOK IN JAFFNA: S. P.'s PHONES 'OUT OF ORDER'

(Continued from Page 1)

wanted a meeting with us and so some of us were in the house of Mr. S. Kathirvetpillai, M. P., for Kopay. At that stage some persons from Chunnakam and some persons from certain other places — I cannot recall the areas — came and told me that Policemen had entered their homes and assaulted them. So I myself tried to contact the S. P., Jaffna. His direct line appeared to be out of order. We tried to get him on the extension from the Jaffna Police. They said that the extension was out of order. Normally we would have gone to his residence because the situation that we knew was developing and was serious enough to call prompt action by him.

"Unfortunately at this stage I should tell the Commission the background of this situation. The S. P.'s residence is inside the Fort. The entrance to the Fort is guarded by the Police. No one is allowed to go in, not even an M. P. Six months before August I went in the company of the M. P., for Vavuniya, Mr. Sellathambu, and a number of lawyers to go to the Jaffna prisons to meet some persons who were released on that day. We were stopped at the gate to the Fort and the policemen there as soon as he saw us stopped us.

"Attacked by Police 6 months earlier"

That was six months before this August incident. We were compelled to turn back our cars and we passed the Police Barracks which was situated at the entrance to the Fort, stones, sticks and other articles were hurled at my car. Viswanathan who happened to be in the car was hit. We stopped the car in front of the S. P.'s office to make a complaint about what happened to us. He treated us in an off-hand way. He said, "Make your complaint to the Reserve P. C." While our complaint was being recorded by the P. C., policemen in civil from the Barracks and the reserve policemen who were stationed in the Jaffna Stadium, about 150 of them rushed out and attacked my car, damaged it and attacked some of the persons who were there near my car. One person had sustained a bleeding injury and he was sent to the hospital and when I got out to see what was happening because my wife was all alone in the car, I myself was assaulted by a Police Constable when the A.S.P., was by my side. A complaint was made and the constable was identified. I could not identify the man. Some of the clerks in the S.P.'s Office identified the man who assaulted me. There was no prosecution. I think he was interdicted. I think the matter stands at that stage.

"In this matter, we did not want to take a chance to go to the S. P.'s home at that time of the night and so we contacted A. S. P. Noordeen and told him the

National Truck. I am not sure whether it was the number but there can be no mistake that it was a Police Truck because there was no Inter National Truck of that

said 'I am staying 10 miles away from Jaffna and you don't know what is happening in Jaffna'. He also told me that the extension line was quite in order and that it was

that time I also learned one other fact: the S.P. made me to understand that on the 14th at Puttur, there had been some incident between some cyclists and a police patrol party and one police constable was injured. That also I came to know when I was at the S. P.'s office.



The Dutch Fort in Jaffna. Entrance was guarded by the Police

situation that was developing. He told me that he would contact the Chunnakam Police and the others involved and bring the situation under control. On the 15th night and in the early hours of the 16th morning Policemen in civil had gone out and attacked a number of motor vehicles that were parked in the garage at K. K. S., Road and Hospital Road. The wind screens of a number of motor vehicles were smashed at about 12 or 1 in the early hours of the 16th morning and proceeded to pour kerosene or petrol, I do not know which, and tried to set fire the mats. They had selected the most inflammable material they could find in the market. Fortunately the shop keepers were sleeping there. They got up and put out the fire.

"Neon sign lights were smashed from K. K. S. Road to the Hospital up to the hospital. The Neon sign light at Subhas Cafe and a number of lights at other places were broken up and shortly after that a Police Truck followed Policemen went and questioned the people who were in the market as to whether they could not identify them. They said that they were khaki shorts and banian and that they were policemen. Those who followed were in uniform. The same truck had come up to the turn off to the Regal Theatre. Then the men in civil got into the same truck and proceeded. In fact the information given to me with regard to the number of the truck which I mentioned and that is 23 Sri 3977. It was a Inter

colour in Jaffna. It was in that truck that they travelled back.

"Complaints of these were made to the M. P., for Jaffna at 5 o'clock in the morning. He telephoned me at 5 or 6 a.m. on the 16th and told me what the Police had done. The situation was tense and so I took action on this matter. I again tried to telephone to contact the S. P. with the result that both his telephones were said to be out of order. Then I contacted the Prime Minister from my telephone at my residence at Vaddukoddai. I told the Prime Minister about this situation. Before 7 o'clock I contacted the Prime Minister though I could not contact the S. P. of Jaffna.

"I telephoned P. M. in Colombo"

"The Prime Minister said he will issue instructions to the I. G. P. to bring the situation under control. I again tried and I told the man at the telephone at the Jaffna police station that I was the Leader of the Opposition and I had a right to speak to the S. P. on a very serious situation that is developing; will you ask him to speak to me within five minutes; I have an important message to give him. The telephone switch was said to be out of order. Suddenly it came into working order and the S. P. spoke to me within five minutes. I told him the situation. He appeared to be surprised that such a thing was happening in Jaffna. I

never out of order either on the previous day or on that day. I said there seems to be something radically wrong with the set-up in the police station and it was a matter for him to find out. Please deal with the situation and please see that the men don't create any problems to the citizens. Having said that, I immediately set out from the residence and went to the S. P.'s office myself.

Police opened fire:

2 killed

"On my way I met a number of students near Koddadi who said that the policemen in jeeps and trucks were running amok through out Jaffna town and they had already been assaulted, they had entered a tutory and smashed up bicycles and they were doing lot of damage; Why don't you do something about it?"

"Then I proceeded to the S. P.'s office. The S. P. was there seated comfortably in his office and the A. S. P. Noor Deen also happened to be there. Then he told me that his jeep was attacked by some persons when he was on his way and that a police party had been sent out to deal with that situation. This was told by A. S. P. Noor Deen. When I was there talking to the S. P. there was a telephone message and the S. P. told me that the police had to open fire and two persons had been killed. This was about 8 or 8.30 in the morning. At

"Police aim their guns at us"

"When I heard of two persons having been shot by the Police of Jaffna, I left the S. P.'s office; I went to see for myself what the situation was and I went to the residence of the M. P. for Jaffna where I learnt that the old market was on fire. The old market was almost entirely burnt, some parts of the new market were also on fire. The row of tailor shops and textile shops on the other side, that is facing Malayan Cafe, were also on fire. So I thought I will contact the Prime Minister again and acquaint him of the situation but the Prime Minister was out and I managed to speak to the Deputy Minister of Defence and he told me that the I. G. P., the Army Commander and Mr. W. T. Jayasinghe, Secretary, Ministry of Defence were on their way by plane and that I would contact them and get them to take the necessary action.

"Then Sir, I, along with M. P. for Jaffna, Mr. Nagarajah, the former Mayor for Jaffna and the M. P. for Manipay Mr. Dharmalingam went to the market to see for ourselves what was happening. We saw a barricade of armed policemen opposite the hospital and there was a crowd of people beyond them. When we tried to proceed towards the burning market, the policemen aimed their guns at us and wanted to shoot. Head Quarter's Inspector Godfrey Goonetilleke made us out, but we were shouting to them 'don't shoot'. He came to us, we got out from our cars and proceeded towards the market.

"There was no attempts being made by anybody to put out the fire. No one was allowed to go near to put out the fire. The police were just keeping the crowd away; neither they nor any members of the public took the slightest action to bring the fire under control. As we were walking along the road side, the A.S.P.

'D. I. G. SAID : IT'S GOING TO BE WORSE THAN 1958'

The HQI and a number of policemen were behind me, the A. S. P. Mr. Noor Deen told me that bombs were being thrown at them. I asked him 'Can you point out the place where the bomb had been thrown; did you see yourself any bomb being thrown'. He said "I did not see; it was the HQI who told me that the bombs were thrown". Then I turned and asked the HQI "Did you see the bombs being thrown and did you find any debris" He said "I did not see any bombs being thrown". Then I asked him "Did you say that to the A. S. P.". He replied "No, I did not tell that to the A. S. P.". Then I asked the A. S. P. "Why did you tell lies like this and on incorrect statements like this, you have shot and killed two persons. I will raise this matter in Parliament and see that you are dealt with".

'I was assaulted by constables'

"As I said that, some of the constables behind me assaulted me. One hit me with the butt of the gun and another hit me with his hands. These two senior officers who were by my side tried to protect me by embracing me. They had no control over the other constables. At that time I turned around and saw that the policemen were without numbers but they were in uniform.

"At that stage I turned around and saw none of the men had numbers. They were in uniform but without numbers. The senior officers were there, but they had not seen to it that these men had identifying numbers on them. At that stage the crowd which had been kept away saw me being assaulted and they started shouting. Mr. Yogeswaran M. P. walked towards the crowd to ask them to go away. At that time four police officers behind fired four shots in the direction of the crowd and the pathetic spectacle at that time was to see the H. Q. I. and others pleading with their men not to shoot. This showed the depths to which discipline in the Jaffna police had sunk. They begged of them not to shoot. Finally we managed to get away and firing in the market continued.

Conference at the "Residency"

"We tried to contact the TAAFI at Palaly and long afterwards their fire brigade arrived and an attempt was made to put out the fires. Later, the I. G. P., the Army Commander and the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence arrived and a conference was held at the "Residency". That was towards the evening. At that conference a suggestion was made that a curfew should be declared to bring the situation under control.

A number of Members of Parliament were there. We opposed a curfew. We said that the trouble was caused by the police. They were setting fire and shooting men. We said that if they imposed a curfew they would be giving the police unlimited licence to do what they wanted. I think the Secretary, Ministry of Defence, the I. G. P. and the Army Commander accepted it and did not recommend a curfew.

We made a request that the police be taken off the roads and the army personnel put on the roads. Another matter taken up and discussed was the question of the University students in the Jaffna Campus.

"While we were at the conference, I think Dr. Luther and another Professor came and said there was slight

it and summarily wanted them to turn back and go. This was reported to me by the M.P.s and by that time the D.I.G. was also in Jaffna—actually the D. I. G. and the S. P. Anuradhapura and all of them were at the conference on the 16th at the Residency. This is relevant with regard to the incidents at Anuradhapura.

"When we made representations about the D. I. G. Jaffna the D. I. G. suggested that the S. P. Anuradhapura could be charged. We agreed to that. When this incident took place on the 17th I contacted D. I. G. Mr. Ana Seneviratne and told him about it. The outcome of the complaint was that after the M. P.s' cars passed that way the wind screens were smashed. The outcome of the complaint was that after that every car that passed that way had its wind screen smashed. It was in that process

He said that there was no C. T. B. bus anywhere on the road and therefore this was a canard. I requested him to check it up. Thereafter he made a very significant remark to me and which I mentioned in Parliament and which I want Your Honour to give your mind. He told me that the trouble had gone to Anuradhapura, and Kurunegala. That was on the 17th. He said, "Tomorrow it will spread in Colombo and to other places". It is going to be worse than 1958. "This was what the D. I. G. told me at the Air Port. He is Mr. Ana Seneviratne, D. I. G. of the Northern Range still. In fact, I asked him, "If you are aware of this, what action are you taking?" I had no reply from him to that.

"Then when Mr. Hurulle and Mr. Werapitiya arrived

their heads were all broken. In fact I have certain photographs which I would like to produce. The heads that were broken had been replaced to some extent and these photographs depict the damage that was done to the Jaffna market which look like the ancient ruins of Anuradhapura. (The photographs are marked X2 and X3). To show the extent of the damage it is necessary for us to produce the photographs. The market is being rebuilt and therefore it is not possible for your Honour to see them in the condition they were then.

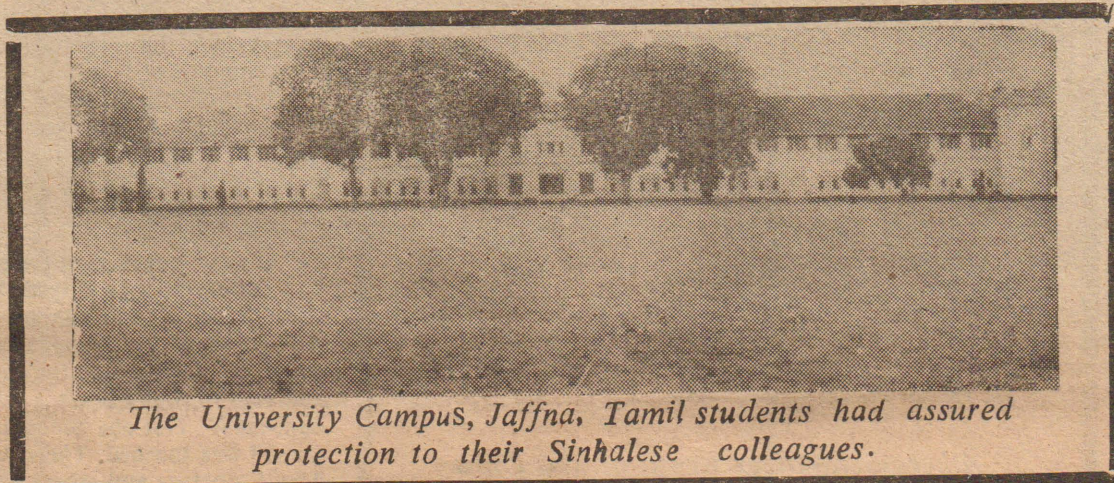
"Not only were the statues but even the statue or a youth leader erected at Urumpirai was completely broken. Urumpirai is about four or five miles away from Jaffna town. there were reports of some temples being attacked and damaged under cover of the curfew on the 19th and the 20th.

on the 26th a whole row of shops adjoining the Jaffna bus stand were completely burnt down. Now they have been rebuilt by the Municipal Council.

Phone reports every 5 minutes

"These were the outlines of the incidents that took place in Jaffna. Now, Sir, in this connection, before I deal with the other incidents, I would like to produce a letter I wrote to the Hon'ble Prime Minister on the 21st when the 48 hour curfew was on; I was in Colombo; I received reports on the telephone practically every five minutes. So I thought I must acquaint the Prime Minister of the situation. I contacted him many a time on the telephone, contacted various officers and tried to rush whatever relief that was possible to the people. In fact I had telephone calls from Galle, Kandy, from Negombo and Wattala in regard to the attacks on Tamils and their properties when the Curfew was on. So I wrote a letter and in fact my messages who took the letter was Mr. Rudramoorthy who is appearing as Counsel in this case. I had no contemporaneous note of what transpired at that time.

"In that letter I have enumerated a number of incidents that had happened during that particular time. (Rands the first page) I don't want to read the whole letter (Marked X2) I read this part to show Your Honour that I had brought these matters to the notice of the Prime Minister and also have placed on record and I want Your Honour to be fully impressed with the fact that in spite of wild rumour (Continued overleaf)



tension in the campus and it might be advisable to take out the Sinhalese students. We questioned them and found that there was no trouble between the students. They were friends. The Tamil students had assured that they would give protection to the Sinhalese students. They feared that outsiders would interfere. We decided that an Army guard be placed at the gates and watch the situation and take a decision the following day. These troubles continued on the 16th night. When the Army was patrolling there was no trouble.

What happened near the Naga Vihara

"On 17th August the police came back and trouble started again. With regard to the police shooting and the deaths I would request your Honour to call for the Magistrate's inquest proceedings and his findings which is very essential. I do not want to go into the details. On the 17th we had a request from the University Authorities that some Members of Parliament should be sent to the Campus to speak to the students and keep them in good humour and see that there was no tension in the campus. Mr. Rajalingam and others went by car to the campus. There was a police barricade or a post near the Naga Vihara and when the M. P.s went there the police on duty broke their flags, took out the tin of petrol and threw

that the wind screen of the car of the former District Judge, Mr. Thambithurai, was smashed.

Mr. Ana Seneviratne's significant remark

"Then I decided to proceed to Colombo that day itself to contact the Prime Minister and do the needful. When I was at the Air Port on the 17th evening the M. P. for Chavakachcheri, Mr. Navaratnam; the M. P. for Jaffna, Mr. Yogeswaran, contacted me over the telephone and they told me that the policemen who were near Naga Vihara had taken charge of a C. T. B. bus and had driven it to Kannathiddi where the jewellery shops are, and that they have information that the policemen had broken into one of the jewellery shops and looted some of the articles from this shop into the bus and taken them away. In that process they had also shot a man near the Sivan Temple at Kannathiddi.

"This information was given to me on the 17th when I was at the Air Port. The D. I. G. Ana Seneviratne was also at the Air Port awaiting the arrival of Mr. Hurulle, Minister of Cultural Affairs and Deputy Minister of Defence Mr. Werapitiya. I promptly conveyed this information to the D. I. G., and his reaction was that he flatly denied that the police would have done anything like that.

at the Air Port I told them about the information I had about the jewellery shop being looted by the Police. I asked them to check up on this. That night the Deputy Superintendent of the Jaffna Bus Depot, Mr. Thangarajah produced the driver one James and the Conductor before Mr. Hurulle. They made statements as to what happened and what the Police did. Then I proceeded to Colombo and on the 18th I moved for an adjournment of the debate and I placed all these facts which I knew before the Government.

"By that time things had escalated. In fact even before I left a number of injured persons had arrived by the Jaffna train on the 17th morning having been attacked and looted at the Anuradhapura Railway Station. Before I take Your Honour to the events at Anuradhapura and other places I think I will deal fully with the various developments that took place in Jaffna. At our request, curfew was not declared in Jaffna till the 19th

Scholars' statues smashed up

"An all island curfew was declared on the 19th evening. Jaffna also came under that curfew and on the 19th night under cover of the curfew all the statues of Tamil Scholars that were put up on the road in Jaffna and

ANURADHAPURA

that were circulated all over, not one Sinhalese civilian was even touched in Jaffna during the whole of this episode.

Three Trains were attacked

"I will now come to the incidents that have developed in Anuradhapura and other places. The trouble started around midnight at the Anuradhapura railway station. This happened on the 16th night. The Colombo bound mail train from Jaffna steamed in when the mail train from Colombo to Jaffna was halted on the platform. Certain persons, I think one has to try to identify these persons; I have a lurking suspicion that some of them were policemen in civil, had rushed from the train that came from Jaffna shouting 'Sinhalese were being attacked in Jaffna and that Tamils should be killed. In fact, Sir, it could not have been spontaneous. There must have been some organisation behind it because immediately the Tamil passengers in both the trains were attacked. A number of people were injured, all the women were relieved of their 'Thali' and other jewellery; their belongings were plundered. The minor employees of the railway station and the residents of railway quarters near the station took a very big part in the attack on the two trains. The same thing happened to the mail train from Ta'aimannar to Colombo. Armed policemen were on the platform when all these took place and they did nothing.

'Thalikodys' and Jewellery loot

In fact it was reported to me by no less a person than an advocate, the son of the late Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayagam, Mr. Chandrasenan. He was also a passenger in that train. Some of the looters were carrying 'thali' and jewellery and other things openly on the platform in front of the armed policemen. But none of the policemen did anything to arrest them or stop it.

Anuradhapura - the 17th morning

On the 17th morning looting and plundering started at Anuradhapura town. I would like your Honour to give your mind to one aspect - that in Anuradhapura a systematic campaign had been organised to uproot and chase away the Tamils who had lived there for several years and for generations. All Tamil houses were attacked. It was systematic campaign. If the house belonged to a Tamil the house was razed to the ground. If the house belonged



TAMIL SCHOLARS' STATUES SMASHED UP. Statue above is that of Thiruvalluvar, author of the world-renowned didactic work, the "Thirukural" popularly attributed to the first century A.D.

Albert Schweitzer wrote of the Thirukural. "There hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find so much of lofty wisdom." -Ed.



This is the statue of the venerated Tamil poetess AVVAI, or AVVAIYAR as she is respectfully referred to. She is compared to the great Greek lyric poetess, Sappho. -Ed.

to a Sinhalese and was occupied by a Tamil, such house was looted but not damaged. Even the house of Mr. Nadarajah a reputed Proctor was completely demolished. All this was systematically done. Doctors, M. L. Ts, Apothecaries in hospitals were attacked by the minor employees. Some of them escaped with injuries. Some succumbed. One Sivasambaram a M.L.T. died. I do not want to say much about it because a case is pending.

Refugees denied even water

"In the railway stations the minor employees attacked the station masters and other senior staff and a number of station masters and accountants were killed. At the Tractor Station at Anuradhapura four Tamils were killed. One Accountant in the Education Department climbed a tree and stayed there for four days. This spread to the N. C. P. and beyond and by the 18th it had spread to the entire country.

"In this connection I want to mention the role played by the S. P., Anuradhapura. As I said Mr. Liyanage had come to Jaffna on the 16th and seen for himself what had happened. Not one Sinhalese person was touched. There are Tamil doctors and others who reported to me that this officer who should have been responsible for maintenance of law and order had openly told people when a number of Tamils had been killed, "What is this when compared to what is happening to our Sinhalese people in Jaffna? Sinhalese girls had been nailed to the walls".

"In fact the refugees who took refuge in the Anuradhapura refugee camp were denied drinking water. The M. O. H. was a refugee. The water supply was cut off. The refugees in camps particularly those with babies in arms were devoid of drinking water. They were not provided with water for drinking purposes or for their ablutions. Neither the G. A. nor the S. P. did anything to help these people.

Kekirawa-Lorries were burnt down

These incidents spread to other areas and in Kekirawa, almost opposite the police station a number of long established Tamil business places were attacked and looted and burnt down. There were a number of lorries looted of their goods which were on their way from Colombo to Jaffna. The owners drove the lorries to the police station and asked for protection at the Kekirawa police station. The police asked them to put the lorries in Mill belonging to Subramaniam. Five or six of them were parked there. Not only were they

burnt down and looted, the lorry owners were killed. They were chased away. People who ran in one direction managed to escape while the others who ran in the other direction were killed and their bodies have not been recovered.

I have raised this matter in the N. S. A. and asked the Government to get the assistance of the police and the G. A. to get a report to the effect that these people are dead, so that the destitute families may get the benefit of the insurance monies on the lorries and the payment that is paid by the Social Services Dept to the families. But apparently the police at Anuradhapura have not been helpful at all. I contacted the Social Services Dept at Anuradhapura and they have written to the police and the police have not replied. That was reported to me. In this connection I want to mention that some of these victims are in very desperate circumstances.

Lorry owners were cut to pieces

Refugees from some of these areas have been settled at Visvamaru which is about 12 miles from Paranthan. I visited this area the day before yesterday and I wanted to see them for myself. I met three females; three widows and orphans. One of them told me that her husband was a hawk selling clothes. He went out on the 17th morning and never came back. This poor woman is hoping that her husband was somewhere. She was not given the Rs. 3000 which the Government promised nor the Rs. 503 which the Government promised. These females are reduced to destitution. Your Honour will at least see that the authorities co-operate to report on the death of these persons. Probably the persons have not been traced. I have affidavits from some of the females of these affected persons where the facts have been reported that some of the owners of lorries at Kekirawa were cut to pieces and thrown into the tank and the sluices had been opened so that the bodies might flow out with the water in order that the traces of the bodies could not be found. Not only in Kekirawa but in various other places these have happened.

Vavuniya - trouble started after curfew

Having dealt with the Anuradhapura District and the entire North Central Province in an outline, it is relevant at this stage to refer to the peculiar developments that took place in Vavuniya and Trincomalee. Vavuniya and Trincomalee, as your Honour knows, are Tamil majority areas. The majority of the

S. P. & HIS STORY

people living in these areas are Tamils. In Vavuniya trouble started after the all island curfew was declared on the 20th and I myself went to Vavuniya and met people who were affected and got affidavits from them with regard to what happened at Vavuniya and on 1.9.77 I wrote a letter to the Hon'ble Prime Minister attaching copies of eight affidavits from the people who were affected and I would like to submit a copy of the letter I wrote along with the affidavits to your Honour. This letter reads thus: (Reads and produces the letter) I venture to produce this letter so that Your Honour will see that not only the shops were looted but also attempts were made to withdraw the guns.

The role of the Vavuniya Police

"On my representation the Prime Minister ordered that the guns should not be taken away from the people of Vavuniya. At least the people had the solace that they were safe with something to defend themselves. In the incidents that took place at Vavuniya on the 20th and the 21st, both curfew nights, the role played by the Vavuniya Police in the episode in this connection would be relevant. Your Honour would be pleased to summon two Sub-Inspectors; Mr. Nathan and Mr. Kandiah to speak to the facts of what they know. Unfortunately, quite a number of these Police Officers seem to be in fear because their evidence may have to go against certain high-ups in the Police Force who are yet in charge of the Northern Range. With the full sense of responsibility I mentioned on the floor of the House of Parliament and I mention it to Your Honour also that the information that we have is that the D. I. G., in charge of the Northern Range, to say the least, failed in his duty, to put it at the highest, played a high part in the whole thing. He is Mr. Ana Seneviratne. He is the D. I. G., in charge of the Range and that is why number of Police Officers are frightened to come forward to give evidence. I raised this matter in Parliament and asked for an assurance that adequate protection will be given to the Police Officers and an assurance that there will be no victimization for revealing what they know.

Tamil shops looted in Vavuniya

"In Vavuniya all the big Tamil shops in the bazaar were looted and burnt down. The other shops were intact. Your Honour will have to bear in mind that the Vavuniya Bazaar is just behind the Police station. Within 100 yards from the Police Station is the Vavuniya Bazaar, and when one of the jewellery shops was

being looted, S. I. Kandasamy had gone in to apprehend the looters. He tried to shoot at them. The Head Quarter's

Inspector had ordered him not to shoot. Then he tried to apprehend him. One of them dealt him a blow on the

head. Then the man whom he managed to catch escaped. Subsequently the police claim to have identified the man as an ex-insurgent, Rupasinghe. He was later arrested and produced before the Magistrate. Later he appears to have died while on remand. He appears to have died of hydrophobia resulting from a dog bite.

State Corporation Manager's rule

"Eight Tamil villages in the border were attacked and all the houses were burnt down and the Tamil residents of the villages fled. As our information goes, this was done with the connivance of the police and they have encouraged them. In Mullaitivu area, in Kokulai, I have evidence from one Subramaniam, an employee of the Mineral and Sand Corporation whose house was burnt down at Kokulai. The Manager of the Corporation Mr. Walpola and certain armed personnel along with certain Sinhalese residents of the area had gone in Mineral & Sand Corporation vehicle and attacked those Tamil houses and this Subramaniam's house was one of those that was attacked. Representation had been made to the authorities in regard to the part played by Mr. Walpola and some of those army personnel in that connection.

(Sittings adjourned for 15 minutes tea interval.) 12 noon.

A. Amirthalingam,

re-affirmed. (ctd.)

"I now come to the incidents that took place in Mannar. Mannar town had been comparatively quiet till there was an incident where a Sinhalese person had been killed by some persons and from that the police and the army personnel had run riot in Mannar and a number of Tamils were attacked, their shops were looted and burnt. In fact, I understand, Sir, some complaints had been filed against the Asst. Superintendent of Police charging him with some of those incidents in the Mannar Magistrate's Court, but in Mannar the entire damage to Tamil Shops, property and injury to Tamil persons was the result of police action aided by some of the army personnel. I would like to say that it is not the entire army which had been acting improperly. There were only certain members of the army who acted in this fashion. On the whole, the regulars of the Army had not fallen a victim to indiscipline.

Planned Colonisation in Trincomalee

"In Trincomalee the events took a different turn. At the time this country be-

came independent in 1948, Trincomalee was predominantly a Tamil speaking area. After independence, pursuing a policy of planned colonisation of this area with Sinhalese colonists in Allai, Kantalai, Padavia and various other places around Trincomalee town, thousands of Sinhalese were planted. When communal violence erupted in other parts of the country, M. P. for Trincomalee, Mr. Sampanthan, the S. P. Trincomalee and the Government Agent, Trincomalee, jointly issued an appeal in Sinhala and Tamil to the people of Trincomalee to remain calm and till the 20th, Trincomalee town itself was fairly quiet but unfortunately in the colonisation areas, that is in Katalai, Allai and other places Tamils were attacked and killed. A Tamil Research Assistant, a highly qualified young man was attacked and killed. The Mechanical Engineers's house was attacked; he was injured; A Tamil cook was killed at Kantalai and various other incidents and assaults took place near about the colonisation areas. As a measure of reprisal to that, in Thampalagama town, there had been a shooting and I think 2 or 3 Sinhalese had died.

Trincomalee - 19

Tamils killed

"Curfew was declared at 5 p. m. on the 20th. Two hours before that a well concerted attack was carried out in the Trincomalee Town and a number of persons - Tamil persons, were killed. The M. P. for Trincomalee will be giving evidence but in order to enable the commission to have a general picture I am mentioning this. Although about 19 Tamils were killed in Trincomalee the colonists with the assistance of the police had attacked a number of shops in the adjoining villages along Anuradhapura Road. As a result of the shooting, either by the police or by the Army, a little girl was killed. Most of the killing in Trincomalee took place in the newly colonised area.

The Incidents in

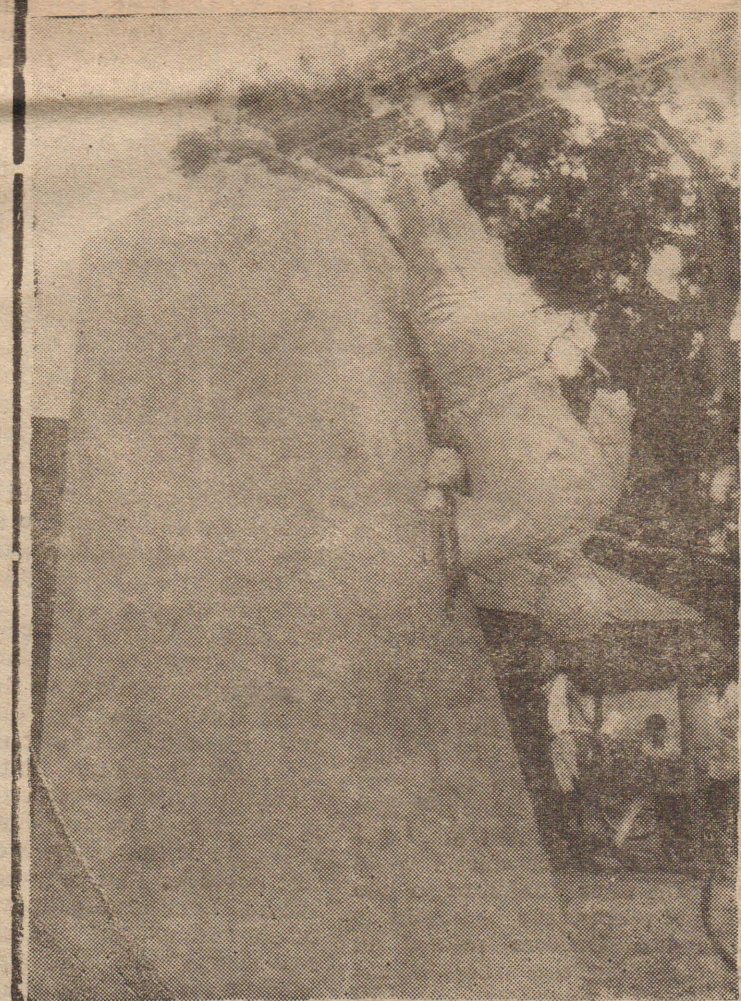
Colombo

"The incidents in Colombo took place or started from the 17th evening by attacking Tamils using public transport and attacking public servants in public offices took place from the 18th onwards. In the C. T. O. and G. P. O. minor employees attacked Tamil public officers who were their superior officers. In the C. T. O. some Tamils who had gone to despatch telegrams and post letters were attacked by the employees of

(Continued Overleaf)



Statue of Jaffna's own Tamil poet Somasundara Pulavar



Five miles away from Jaffna town, in Urumpirai, was this statue of a youth leader Sivakumaran. It was toppled from its base during curfew time.

30,000 REFUGEES IN JAFFNA. 3 SHIPLOADS AMONG THEM

the C. T. O. itself. That was after the 17th-18th, 19th and onwards.

The Ratmalana Killings

"In certain parts of Colombo Sinhalese hoodlums demanded kappan and their demands were not granted. As they were not granted, attacks were carried out in the night. In Dehiwala, Ratmalana, Nugegoda, Kirillapone and other places Tamil houses were attacked and a number of Tamils were killed. At Ratmalana a Mechanical Engineer was killed. His father-in-law was also killed. As reported their bodies were cut into pieces and heaped up. A son of the owner of Rajeswari Stores was killed and from the 20th onwards Tamils were evacuated from their residences to refugee camps. The camp at Saraswathie Hall was opened with the Katubedda Engineering students. The Tamil students who were in hostels and houses were warned to go away by the wardens. Those students came to Colombo and the camp was opened with those students. In two or three days the numbers in the camp became thousands and other camps were opened. Camps were opened at St. Peter's College and various other places and they had to find ways and means of sending them to areas of safety.

Refugees Sent by Sea

"I had to approach the Hon. Prime Minister and request that the refugees be transported by sea to the Northern and Eastern provinces under armed escort. At our request they left on the 24th and on the 26th three ship loads of Tamils—not only from Colombo but those who were at outstations and brought to Colombo, were brought to Jaffna and landed at the K. K. S. harbour. Some of these people were people who had their homes or friends or relations in Jaffna and they came and stayed with them.

30,000 refugees in Jaffna

In fact, on a reasonable estimate I think about 30,000 people came to Jaffna as refugees. There were also thousands of Tamils who had no connection with the North and East and who were residents in small pockets in Sinhalese areas who were housed in camps at Galle, Matara and other places—all of whom were sent to Batticaloa and Jaffna. They were housed in Jaffna and Kilinochchi. Some Tamil evacuees managed to get away on their own and came and joined these camps.

"In Kilinochchi alone there were ever 6000 who had no homes or connections anywhere in the Northern and Eastern provinces. In this connections, Sir, on 30th August I had to write to the Hon'ble Prime Minister to request adequate measures to rehabilitate and to settle those people in places of safety. I am producing that letter of 30th August, 1977 marked X4. (Reads X4.)

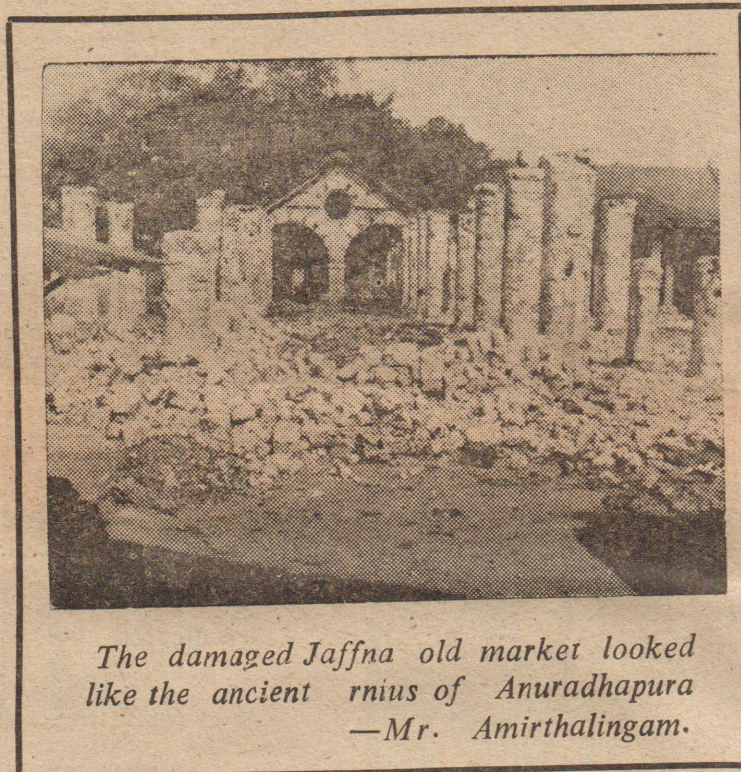
The Kalubowila hospital incidents

Then I go on to deal with the Tamil Public Servants. I will come to that later. The Tamil students from

punishment of any minor employee who attacked the Tamil employees in the various Government offices.

In Colombo, the Police looked on

"In Colombo I will not say that the Police played any part in attacking the Tamils. They were just looking on. Actually in Tamil areas; in Jaffna, Trincomalee, Vavuniya, Mannar and in Anuradhapura the police looked on when the looting took place. There seems to have been some plan behind the whole attack. In predominantly Tamil areas and where there were no Sinhalese hoodlums the Police attacked but in other areas where the Tamils were living in a minority they



The damaged Jaffna old market looked like the ancient ruins of Anuradhapura
—Mr. Amirthalingam.

various campuses; the students from the Agricultural School at Kundasale and the Technical Institutes in Sinhalese areas all of whom had fled from those areas and came to the North and East. We had to make alternative arrangements for accommodation. I produce this letter marked X4 and it was in this connection that I read this letter X4.

"To go back to the incidents in Colombo, I do not want to go into all those details. In the Kalubowila Hospital, for instance, not only the Tamil Doctors and officers but even Tamil patients were attacked. In Negombo Tamil shops and houses were attacked. The Tamils travelling in buses and trains were attacked. In all these instances the Police were looking on when the attacks and looting took place. There was a curious incident of Lady Doctor running for refuge to the Nurses' Domitory and th. Matron chased them away. That is the depth to which cruelty to human beings were perpetrated during those days. The assailants who attacked the Tamil Officers have gone unpunished. As far as I could gather one employee in the Port Cargo Corporation was punished. There was no

were attacked by the Sinhalese hoodlums when the Police were looking on. They were aided in their inaction.

Tamil S. P.'s orders not carried out

"I think in the Kandy area it really started on the 19th. I had occasion to take action on certain complaints and I personally met the Prime Minister and acquainted him of the situation that was developing in Kandy. I had information at that stage and this is a matter which I would want Your Honour to go into and that is, the subordinate Police Officers refused to carry out the orders of the Tamil Superintendent of Police. This information I got when I was with the Prime Minister himself and on my request for immediate action the Prime Minister asked the Co-ordinating Officer who was appointed to the Kandy area to proceed by helicopter to Kandy immediately and bring the situation under control. I think it was necessary for a Sinhalese Officer to give the orders if it was to be carried out by the Sinhalese Police Officer.s

That was why they had to rush the Sinhalese Co-ordinating Officer to Kandy to maintain law and order. Not only in Kandy but also in Wattagama just in front of the Police Station 54 Tamil shops were burnt down. In fact the cashier in one of the shops was burnt alive inside the shop.

Hindu temple in the campus

"In some of the estate areas, line rooms were attacked. Tamil women were raped and even the meagre savings of the poor labourers were taken away. This was done by the Sinhala villagers residing in the lands taken over under the LRC in the vicinity of the line rooms. We had reports that plantation labourers were sleeping under tea bushes, too frightened to go back to the line rooms. This was widespread all over from Galle in the South; all over the Sinhalese territory this took place, except in the Uva hill country where the Tamil people lived in larger concentration. There were sporadic incidents here and there but there was no concentrated major attacks on Tamil settlements in those areas. In the areas where we get high grown tea, there was not very much attacks. So much of fear was instilled into the minds of these people. In fact I had received hundreds of letters from these poor plantation labourers in the upcountry begging the Government to get them some piece of land where they can live in safety.

Temple peacocks were Killed

In the upcountry, even the Tamils travelling in the trains were attacked. Some of them attacked, stripped and thrown out of the train. In the University campus, fortunately the Campus was in vacation at that time, and there was only few students at Peradeniya, but the deities in the Hindu temples in Peradeniya were beheaded; not only the deities, there were two peacocks that was sacred to Lord Murugan; even those were caught and killed. Things like this happened in Matara, Kandy and other places also.

Unlike the isolated attack in a temple at Panadura in 1958, in 1977 a number of Hindu temples were attacked. In the Kundasale farm school, the students were attacked; they went and hid in the jungle through out the night in the drenching rain and some of them managed to get to Colombo and they immediately contacted me. I

had again to contact the Prime Minister and request him to bring these students to Colombo safely and they were ultimately brought to Colombo and sent back to Jaffna. One of these young men had written a book about their experience in Tamil during those two or three nights and that is the state of feeling which had been created. r f h e e is one significant thing I wish to draw your Honour's attention to.

Tamil settlement near Tissa

There was a settlement of Tamils near Tissamaharama called Tanjanagar. They must have been Tamils who had gone there nearly 150 years ago. I received a petition written in English and signed in Sinhalese.

One Selvadurai has signed it. They had their education in Sinhala and they continued to live in the village. Even though they had their education in Sinhala, they continued to live as Tamils and when the trouble started all over the country they were also attacked and they had to flee through the jungle to Batticaloa.

Sinhalese Wife ran to the North

"I went to the Batticaloa and Kalmunai camps and I got first hand information with regard to their fate. I wish to mention to your honour that this was not directed against anyone, but against the Tamils whether they studied Sinhala or not. In fact I would request your Honour to visit the Visuvamadu refugees camp. I saw a Sinhalese lady there with children born to a Tamil. Her husband is partially blind. She met me day before yesterday and said that they were attacked because she was married to a Tamil. She preferred to come to the North with her husband and children than being attacked in her own village. These are the deep rooted causes that had given rise to this holocaust in the country.

Mother Sinhalese, father a Tamil

"In a refugee camp in Colombo we had a girl whose father had been killed. Her mother was a Sinhalese and her father a Tamil and this poor girl had to flee to the camp to escape being attacked. When Your Honour had to consider remedies, all these may become relevant and that is why I am drawing Your Honour's attention to these incidents. Your Hon-

SINHALA - EDUCATED TAMILS

AT TISSA ALSO ATTACKED

our may have to consider whether intermarriage, whether studying Sinhala and those matters will be a solution to these problems. I am pointing out that the causes are much more deep seated than what may appear on the surface.

Memorandum by the T. R. R. O.

"I have now covered fairly fully the incidents that took place and what the aftermath of these incidents is. I think it is also my duty to place before your Honour what I think are the causes because that is one of the matters I have dealt with in the nature of the events, nature and character of incidents. Their magnitude and their causes are also matters to be considered. The memorandum of the T. R. R. O. has outlined the historical background. I shall deal with the immediate cause as far as the incidents in Jaffna are concerned.

"An Army of occupation"

"The police in Jaffna had started regarding themselves as an army of occupation for quite some years. This attitude had resulted in a number of incidents spread over the last two or three years where the Tamil people were very badly treated by the police. To draw your Honour's attention to one or two of such incidents - the attack on unarmed Tamil people who were at a meeting on 10.1.74 - the I. A. T. R. conference. They had the 4th annual conference in Jaffna attended by Tamil scholars all over the world. On the final day there was a mass farewell function to them close to Veerasingham Hall. About 50,000 attended. An unprovoked attack was launched by the police with tear gas shells etc. and I gave evidence at the Magisterial inquiry. That resulted in a stampede in which nine people lost their lives. We asked for a commission of inquiry by the Government. The government refused to have it and the Citizens' committee of Jaffna appointed a commission consisting of two ex-Judges and the Lord Bishop of Jaffna - Bishop Kulendran. Messrs de Kresten and Manicavasagar were the two ex-Judges. That commission was appointed by the citizens of Jaffna. These three gentlemen recorded evidence for three days and gave a finding that the attack by the police was unprovoked.

A. S. P. was given a promotion

"As far as I know, no action was taken. The only action taken was that the A. S. P. responsible for this attack was made an S. P. This was followed by another shooting incident at Chemany where a Tamil youth returning from the Nallur temple was shot and killed. I do not want to go into the details because I understand the police officers responsible are indicted before the High Court.

"I referred to the assault on me and the others in front of the office of the S. P. Of course I learnt later that after I went and complained he went to the fish market to buy fish. That was the attitude displayed by superior police officers when complaints are made against police officers. There were several such incidents. It may no doubt be said that there were incidents of youth violence in Jaffna. I am not seeking to hide any of these facts from your Honour. It is the duty of the police to bring lawlessness from whatever source it may come, under control.

"Born to Rule the Tamils"

"What happened at Jaffna was that the police became lawless. The superior officers, at least most of them, were helpless and condoned the actions of the police. I would request your Honour also to give your mind why these police officers behaved like this. On the one hand it is a racist feeling which had been inculcating in their minds. They were made to treat the Tamils as inferior. They were taught to feel they were superior and were born to rule the Tamils. That was a feeling that had started developing after 1948 and it developed by leaps and bounds particularly after 1956. New recruits to the police who came in were mostly young men born during that period whose whole background and thinking was that they had to rule the Tamils and not do police duty. This is one of the causes one has to keep in mind in analysing the events that took place.

"Then, Sir, another aspect as I said, in Trincomalee and in certain other places there was a wrong policy of colonization; planned

Sinhalese colonists were settled in Tamil areas and made the Tamils minorities in their own traditional areas and made the Tamils targets of attack. The persons who were settled there had the feeling that the Tamils had no right to live in those areas and that they should be chased out. As I remarked, where the Sinhalese were not in sufficient numbers to do this the Police did that. Where they were in sufficient numbers the hoodlums did it with the Police looking on.

Wrong teaching of history

"If the correct type of man with the correct training had been in charge of maintaining law and order perhaps, this situation may not have developed in the way it did. So that, Sir,



The Jaffna bus stand shops on fire

in looking for causes one has to look beyond merely the origin of the incidents in Jaffna. One has to look for deep seated causes which may unfortunately be embedded in the history of the country. In fact, in Parliament itself when we speak of it responsible members of Parliament said that there is Dutugemunu blood in every Sinhalese Youth. Dutugemunu and Elara lived 2500 years ago and yet this is being fretted out. I do not know whether the wrong teaching of history based on this legend is also not at the bottom of all these things.

Police & people no Communication

"I do not want to treat Your Honour to my views on these matters but I think that I should place before Your Honour this deep seated cause and the immediate cause, namely,

the lawlessness of the police and the lack of discipline and proper training for the Police. There was a complete break down of communication between the Police and the people, most of them did not know the language of the people in the North and East. They did not care to know. While normal crime went undetected they were concentrating on political activities of their own. Unfortunately to my mind certain superior officers in the Police Force were aiding and abetting this trend on the part of the lower rungs of the Police Force. As for what remedy I would suggest, as I said at the outset, I will reserve it for a later date after Your Honour had the entire evidence, preferably in Colombo

Restaurant car incident

There is one point which I overlooked. During the interval it struck me before the attack on the trains in Anuradhapura there appears to have been an incident involving the Restaurant Car at Punkankulam Railway Station where somebody was attacked but nobody had identified the persons who attacked. I do not know who they were. Somebody had attacked some people in the Restaurant Car of the Colombo bound Mail Train. It was reported that the waiters in the Restaurant Car were also responsible for rousing the people in Anuradhapura to attack the people in the train. This fact I had overlooked earlier. Maybe there is other evidence which I have not mentioned.

Govt. sales points looted

Another point which I had not referred to was that on the evening of the 16th there had been looting in various parts of Jaffna, when the Police were keeping guard. Instead of putting out the fire at the market they allowed the undesirable elements to have a free hand in the looting of the Salu sala and Laksala, Government sales points in Jaffna. There had been instances like that which I could not see for myself having been prevented effectively by the constables who attacked me. So that, there may be certain incidents which I have not referred to. I have placed a general picture of the events. I thank you.

Your Honour will permit me to come before Your Honour on those dates.

The Sansoni Commission Evidence

SUBSCRIPTION

One Year 50-00

Half Year 25-00

194A, BANDARANAYAKE MAWATHA,
COLOMBO-12

Phone: 23411

"Nothing is ever settled until it is settled right"

— Rudyard Kipling

The Sansoni Commission Evidence

The Story of the Sri Lanka Race Riots 1977

We get noticed!

All three English morning newspapers dated August 24, 1978 carried reports on the reference made to this paper before the Sansoni Commission of Inquiry on August 23.

The "SUN" Published the following, under the sub-head "PAPER ON COMMISSION":

".....At this stage Mr. Lakshman Ranasinghe, Attorney-at-law, brought to the notice of the Commissioner that an English weekly, titled "The Sansoni Commission Evidence" was being published even before the completion of the sittings.

"Producing a copy, Mr. Ranasinghe said it not only carried the evidence but also the comments.

"The Commissioner said he too had got a copy that morning and asked Mr. Tennekoon to take the matter up with the Attorney General."

The "CEYLON DAILY NEWS" said the following:

The Commissioner directed Senior State Counsel, Mr. P. Tennekoon to refer to the Attorney General a special publication called—"Sansoni Commission Evidence," published in English for necessary action.

Mr. Lakshman Ranasinghe Attorney-at-law, appearing for the Sri Lanka Tharuna Bhikkshu Peramuna had brought to the notice of the Commission that the publication had made comments on evidence given, and that he took objection to it.

The "CEYLON DAILY MIRROR" stated:-

At this stage Mr. Lakshman Ranasinghe, on behalf of the Sinhala Tharuna Peramuna brought to the notice of the Commission that a new publication entitled the Sansoni Commission Evidence the first issue of which was put out on August 19 was carrying comments and editorials on the evidence led so far and that it could constitute an infringement on the privileges of the Commission.

The one-man Commissioner Mr. M. C. Sansoni directed Senior State Counsel, Mr. P.

Tennekoon to consult the Attorney-General as to what steps if any should be taken in regard to the publication.

Having now given our readers the three newspaper versions, we invite them to read the authentic transcript of the

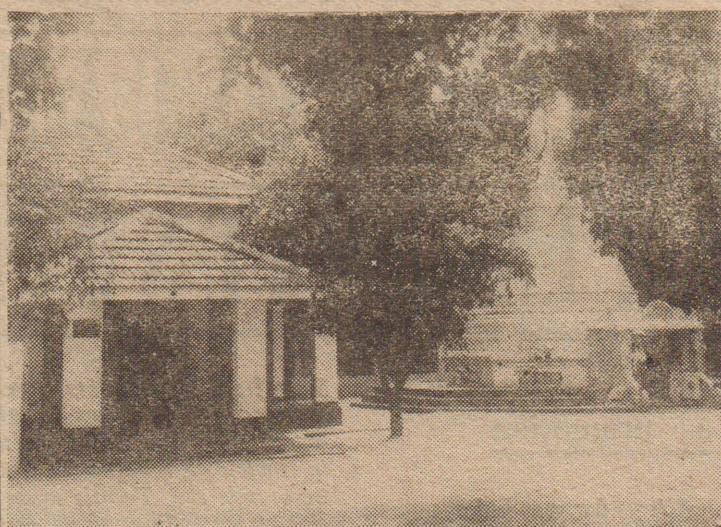
University

Students

and Police

Wireless

also Spread



The Naga Vihare, Jaffna.

FALSE RUMOURS

Mr. G. P. S. Silva: May I put certain questions to clarify?

Commissioner: Yes.

To Mr. A Amirthalingam

You referred to the incidents on the 12th August and the 13th August at the St. Patrick's Carnival. Are those matters which you referred to within your personal knowledge or on representation made to you?

A. I checked up from the organiser of the Carnival, Dr. Philip. I collected all these information so that I may present the case fully to the Parliament.

Q. You referred to a row of shops being burnt on the 26th of August. Would you tell us whether that was on a day when the Curfew was on?

A. The Curfew was on and fire started during night. I got information about that at 2 o'clock from a watcher in the Power Station which adjoins the row of shops.

Q. Could you assist the Commission by making your observation about the rumours and

whether that was responsible for this violence?

A. In fact I had reports that there were rumours partly spread by a group of University students who had gone from Jaffna and they appeared to have spread rumours that they had been attacked, that the girls had been molested and even went to the extent of saying that some of them had been mutilated and nailed and currency had been given to these rumours by mischief makers and police officers. There was even the rumour that Naga Vihara had been damaged. I have information that the Jaffna police wireless had been used and this particular information had been sent to the other police stations. Definitely I had information from reliable sources that Naga Vihara at Naga Deepa had been damaged and that this information had been conveyed through the police wireless from Jaffna to the other stations. That may have been responsible for the attack on the Hindu temples in other places.

Q. In regard to the incidents that took place at Anuradhapura on the early hours of the 17th could you venture any view in regard to the position, if that night mail had not left that night from Jaffna, this violence in Anuradhapura may not have taken that form?

A. Cannot say, but I have information that in the train that left Jaffna on the 16th evening, there were some policemen in civil clothes and my view is they had definitely travelled in that train and they were responsible for creating all that trouble. If those men had not travelled, this trouble would not have taken place. In fact on the 17th morning, the Yaldevi that came from Colombo had to stop at the Pothuhara railway station because of the signal and that train too was attacked. The Tamil passengers were relieved of all their possession and thereafter the train travelled back to Colombo. With that, they cancelled the entire train service.

relevant portions as it happened. Please look out for it in our next issue.

— The Editor



It doesn't take much to become a refugee

in your own country

Your race can be enough.

Adv.
With apologies to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

NEWS FLASHBACKS '77

From the "CEYLON DAILY NEWS" of Saturday 20, 1977.

DEFENCE MINISTRY SCOTCHES RUMOURS

Rumours are being spread by designing individuals that Buddhist temples in Jaffna and Nagadeepa have been damaged and that Sinhalese residents, including students have been killed or seriously harmed. These rumours are absolutely false, said a Defense Ministry communique issued last night.

"No damage has been caused to any Buddhist

temples in these areas and not a single Sinhalese has been harmed, killed or molested in any manner", the communique added.

JAFFNA CAMPUS: "RUMOURS FALSE"

"It is evident that various groups and individuals are deliberately inciting people to loot, violence, arson and murder by spreading false and malicious rumours regarding incidents purported to have taken place in the North, especially to the Jaffna campus

Sinhalese students", said three University teachers of the campus.

They told the "Daily News" "The Jaffna campus was closed for all students on Wednesday the 17th instant because of the tension prevailing there as a result of clashes between the police and the civilians.

"More than 400 students together with members of the academic staff, left Jaffna that afternoon in special CTB buses and all

of them reached Anuradhapura safely that night. The following day special CTB buses again took students to destinations such as Kurunegala, Kandy and Colombo.

"We too travelled in these buses and reached Colombo last night". The three teachers are Mr. HARSHA GUNAWARDENE, Dept. of English Jaffna campus (UTA) Mr. D. N. SUGATHADASA, Dept. of English, Jaffna campus (UTA) and Mr. D. THIRANAGAMA, Dept. of Geography (UTA).